

Kids Welcome: Family-Friendly Wineries on the East Coast

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Stodgy or raucous, wineries and wine-tasting rooms can be illuminating or fun — until kids enter the family.

Sometimes adults don't want children around while they sip, and sometimes local regulations forbid kids under a certain age from being on the grounds of wine establishments. But you're in luck: There are wineries all over the East Coast that not only allow but actually encourage children to visit.

At these destinations that turn sour grapes into magic grown-up juice, kids get to see how the transformation works among some of the country's most beautiful scenery. And you can follow up your tittle with a picnic, a game of Frisbee with the kids or just plain old quality family time.

Rhode Island

[Newport Vineyards](#), just 3.5 miles from Newport, Rhode Island, is a family-owned winery that opened in 1995. Children are wholeheartedly welcome and can burn off energy playing cornhole and a giant version of Jenga. Pets, on a leash, must remain outdoors. Visit from noon to 4pm on weekends for free live music. Take an easy hike or birdwatch along the Aquidneck Land Trust's Sakonnet Greenway Trail, connecting through Newport Winery. Eat local as farmers, purveyors and artisans gather for a Saturday farmers market. Hourlong tours are offered at the winery year-round, but not necessarily daily. Lunch is available at Vineyard Café and Bakery and dinner at Brix. Beyond the winery tour, adults will enjoy the marketplace shop and wine tastings (\$15 with souvenir logo glass). The winery is part of the Coastal Wine Trail, stretching from Cape Cod to coastal Connecticut.



Newport Vineyards. (Photo courtesy of Newport Beach Hotel & Suites)

Newport Vineyards has reds (merlot, pinot noir, cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon, etc.), whites (chardonnay, sauvignon blanc, pinot grigio, riesling, etc.), blush, reserve wines (pinot gris, dry riesling), and a brut sparkling wine.

Nearby Activities: Nearby is the National Museum of American Illustration, with a collection that includes such artists from the golden age of illustration as Norman Rockwell, Howard Pyle, Maxfield Parrish, N.C. Wyeth and dozens of others. Migratory birds stop at the Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, and so should you.

Where to Stay: You can use a [Marriott Rewards 35k free-night certificate](#) at either the [Residence Inn Newport Middletown](#) or [Courtyard Newport Middletown](#)). [If you have Hilton points](#), go for the [Hampton Inn](#) or [Homewood Suites](#), both in nearby Middletown. There's also a [Holiday Inn in Middletown](#) from 35k [IHG Rewards Club points](#).

New York

[Palaia Winery](#), a hippy-feeling winery in the heart of the Hudson Valley, offers live music by local musicians on the weekend, either on the SummerStage outdoors or the Sweet Clover Room and Treehouse venues indoors. Check its website for festivals, May through September. Cornhole, hammocks and an inflatable Amazing Maze provide fun times for families. Children are allowed inside during regular tasting room hours. Only those 21 and over are allowed after 6pm.

Red and white wines go by the names of Zappa Franc, Dead Red, Pearl Power, and Pinkish Floyd, and they offer craft beers, signature cocktails, hard cider, local spirits and snacks. Tastings include six wines for \$5.

(Photo courtesy of Palaia Vineyards)

Nearby Activities: The Storm King Art Center is a 500-acre outdoor art center that is great for walking and exploring, having a picnic, enjoying fall foliage or frolicking in snow-covered countryside. Check the schedule hands-on programs for children and families, starting at 1pm every Sunday from May through November. The size and creativity of the large-scale and site-specific sculptures will amaze your children, who may be used to seeing indoor art made from conventional materials. Among the artists whose works have been displayed here are Alexander Calder, Dorothy Dehner, Barbara Hepworth, Jerome Kirk, Roy Lichtenstein, and Maya Lin.

Bring your bikes to pedal through the wooded and rolling grounds. Adult bikes are available to rent. Bring sunscreen and bug spray and wear comfortable shoes.

Where to Stay: There's a [Hampton Inn Harriman Woodbury](#) with two queens or a king with sofa-bed for 40,000 Hilton points.

Pennsylvania

Outside of Gettysburg, the [Adams County Winery](#) is one of the oldest operating wineries in the Keystone State. Rusty, the golden retriever mascot, welcomes children and pets and invites you to his annual birthday party in June. Children have plenty of space to run and play, and get a choice of nonalcoholic drinks. There are classes, free winery tours, chocolate and wine pairings, grape stomping, live music (bring a chair or blanket), festivals and pizza from the wood-fired oven.

Among the wines available from Adams County are riesling, lavender riesling, cabernet sauvignon, pinot noir, merlot, and a variety of canned wines. Wine tastings are free for three samples or \$6 for six samples and a souvenir tasting glass. Three other, more extensive, tours are available for an additional fee.



(Photo courtesy of Adams County Winery)

Nearby Activities: Just miles away is the Gettysburg National Military Park, where history buffs and students of the Civil War can spend hours or days or weeks exploring the historic battlefield and the surrounding area. Start your visit at the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center.

The Lincoln Train Museum is a great place for children to play with puzzles, dress up as Lincoln, take a simulated train ride, see lots of model trains (some running), and learn about the train trip Lincoln's body took from Washington back to Illinois after he was assassinated. The exhibits also include Americana from politics to sports, the world wars and other periods of American history. Check the website for winter hours, which may change because of inclement weather and other factors.)

Where to Stay: Standard rooms at the [Hampton Inn Gettysburg](#) are often 40,000 Hilton points per night (or less), and suites can be booked for additional points. The [Wyndham Gettysburg](#) is 15,000 Wyndham points per night.

Maryland

For a one-stop-for-everything place, visit [Rocklands Farm Winery and Market](#) for fruit, vegetables, pasture-raised meats and, of course, wine. A designated family area is a great place for running around, climbing on big tires, playing lawn games and enjoying the working farm. The tasting room and market are open Wednesdays through Sundays, and the wine tasting provides a selection of six wines for \$14 a person. Guided winery tours are offered Saturdays at noon (and by appointment) and self-guided tours at other times. Families are welcome until 6pm; all evening events are for adults only.

The winery sells pinot noir, merlot, cabernet sauvignon, a blackberry dessert wine, chardonnay, roses, and several blends.

(Photo courtesy of Rockland Farms Winery)

Nearby Activities: If your children (or you) have never seen a small ferry boat, then head to the historic White's Ferry that crosses the Potomac to Virginia, a little north of Leesburg, which has been operating since 1782. The ferry follows a wire cable and is propelled by a small diesel boat on the upriver side. When the ferry reaches the far side, the ferry pilot casts off a line and the current carries the small boat around to point it in the right direction for the return. It takes about 15 minutes for the crossing.

Sugarloaf Mountain is hardly a mountain (1,283 feet, but only 800 feet above the surrounding countryside), but it's a perfect example of a monadnock, an isolated hill suddenly appearing out of rolling countryside. Ah, geologic teaching moment. It's a registered National Natural Landmark because of its geological interest and striking beauty. Then it's time for hiking, rock climbing, biking, picnicking and sightseeing, all free. A series of trails link the east and west faces. The blue trail is for hikers; the yellow trail for biking and horseback riding.

Where to Stay: [Fairfield Inn and Suites by Marriott](#), in Germantown, has an indoor heated swimming pool, a microwave and refrigerator in each guest room, and free hot breakfast buffet and room with two guest beds for 35,000 points. There is also a [Holiday Inn Express Hotel and Suites in Germantown](#). The [Hampton Inn Gaithersburg](#) has a heated indoor swimming pool, free hot breakfast buffet and free shuttle to attractions within five-mile radius for 30,000 Hilton points per night.

Virginia

Named the No. 1 family-friendly winery in the world in 2012 by Wine Enthusiast magazine, the [Barrel Oak Winery](#) welcomes "parents with children, people with dogs, hiking groups fresh off the trail, bikers" You get the idea. Activities include barbecues on Sunday, live music, game night and an April Fool's weekend. Birch, a Hungarian Vizsla, is the dog on staff and chief greeter. Children are welcomed with juice

boxes. You're invited to bring a picnic (only Barrel Oak alcohol may be consumed on property) and tour the production facility. Tastings start at \$7.95.

Among the wines they sell are Madeira, chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon, syrah, Seyval blanc, petit verdot, Norton (the state wine), and albarino.

Nearby Activities: Should you somehow run out of things to do at Barrel Oak Winery, travel to 1,860-acre Sky Meadows State Park, where you can learn about astronomy, nature and history, picnic, fish, hike on miles of well-marked trails and stay in the primitive campsite. If you've wanted to hike the Appalachian Trail, it runs through the park. There are 10.5 miles of bridle trails, 22 miles of hiking trails and 9 miles of bike trails. There are views of rolling hills, farms, streams and lots of greenery.



Sky Meadows State Park. (Photo via Virginia.org)

Where to Stay: Staying in the town of Front Royal is a great base for exploring this part of Virginia, whether it's through wine country, Civil War battlefields or Skyline Drive. The [Holiday Inn & Suites Front Royal Blue Ridge Shadows](#) has rooms with two queen beds and a golf-course view for 20,000 IHG points. The Hampton Inn Front Royal has a variety of accommodations for 30,000 points per night.

North Carolina

Visiting the 8,000-acre Biltmore Estate in the Blue Ridge Mountains offers a taste of luxury and an endless supply of things to do: mansion tour (be sure to get the audio guide for kids for an extra fee), garden strolls, horseback riding, boating and hiking, a miniature railway in the gardens, cookie-decorating sessions and more.

Then stop by the [Biltmore winery](#) for complimentary wine tastings and other specialty wine experiences. There's an indoor/outdoor bar, a behind-the-scenes winery tour and tasting and the chance to taste cheeses, charcuteries and locally made truffles, along with reserve and sparkling wines. Children can have free grape juice. You must purchase a Biltmore Estate ticket or spend the night to visit the winery.

Among the 20 wines available are blends, cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay, chenin blanc, gewürztraminer, malbec, merlot, syrah, and zinfandel.

(Photo courtesy of Biltmore)

Nearby Activities: The Asheville Pinball Museum features vintage machines from the '40s as well as newer and retro games, and you can buy an all-day pass that lets you play as much as you want (no need to bring a roll of quarters).

The Western North Carolina Nature Center is home to more than 60 species of native and visiting animals, including otters, black bears, red wolves, cougars, a red-tailed hawk, red panda and other creatures. The center is now a Monarch Waystation. Check

the schedule for such events as wild walk (behind-the-scenes tour), critter time for tykes and tots (for pre-K children) and wild parent day (for those who have adopted animals through the Friends of the WNC Center).

Where to Stay: [Use your Chase Ultimate Rewards points to stay](#) at [The Inn on Biltmore Estate](#) or [The Village Hotel on Biltmore Estate](#). When we checked rates for a date in July, the Inn cost 19,933 points, and the hotel was 14,600 points when using points from the [Chase Sapphire Reserve](#). If you don't want to spend your points, you can earn 3x each dollar spent on travel to use for a future trip.

South Carolina

The time comes when you're at the beach and the heavens open or the temperature drops. You've read, done puzzles and laundry and binge-watched every show you wanted to see. If this happens to you in Myrtle Beach, then head to [Duplin Winery](#), the oldest and largest winery in the South. The winery has a child-friendly, alcohol-free wine tasting (three nonalcoholic "wines" or "slushies"), coloring pages and crayons and a hearty welcome. Wine tasting is \$10 for up to 10 wines with crackers and dip and a souvenir glass.

Nearby Activities: Adjacent to the winery is Alligator Adventure, where you'll see alligators (natch), flamingos, squirrel monkeys, spotted hyenas, tortoises, lemurs, lizards and many more birds and beasts.

Alligator Adventure, a 14-acre theme park in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. (Photo via Carol M. Highsmith's America, Library of Congress Collection/Digitally enhanced by rawpixel)

The Myrtle Beach SkyWheel on the 1.2-mile-long Oceanfront Boardwalk and Promenade was the first big wheel in the United States. It's 187 feet tall, and the view of the Atlantic Ocean to your east and the countryside to your south is expansive.

Where to Stay: For 35K IHG points, you can stay at the [Holiday Inn Express](#), while the [Hampton Inn & Suites Myrtle Beach/Oceanfront](#) has standard rooms for 70,000 points per night. The [Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort](#) is 50,000 points for a standard room.

Georgia

(Photo courtesy of Explore Georgia)

[Cartecay](#) (Cherokee for "bread valley") Vineyards is on property that has been farmed since 1890, and the logo is an image of an old chimney that's still on the property. It provides toys for the little ones and running-around room for your older children. Take time to sip wine or cider, nibble on the cheese platter and listen to live music on the weekends. The old barn is now the rustic tasting room with a tasting fee of \$10 for four wines and a souvenir glass. They sell a variety of blends.

Nearby Activities: Tabor House and Civil War Museum preserves the Gilmer County past with artifacts, photographs, genealogy library and small bookshop. Looms and weaving equipment are upstairs to show how material was made.

Blue Ridge Olive Oil Company teaches you and your family that there's more than EVOO in which to dip your bread, dress your salad or sauté your mushrooms. The international olive-oil-and-vinegar tasting room has 65 varieties of oil and vinegar from all over the world, and tasting is unlimited.

Where to Stay: You have to travel a few miles from Ellijay to use your points, so head to Chatsworth for the [Super 8 by Wyndham Chatsworth/Dalton](#) or the [Super 8 by Wyndham Calhoun](#), where a Go Free award is 15,000 Wyndham Rewards points per night at either motel.

Florida

[San Sebastian Winery](#) is a few blocks from downtown St. Augustine, in the Henry Flagler East Coast Railway Building. There are free, 45-minute guided winery tours and tastings daily that start with an audiovisual presentation. Children are welcome on the tour, although the actual wine tasting is limited to those 21 and older. Live jazz, blues, classical and R&B bands perform in the Cellar Upstairs most weekends.

San Sebastian's 75-acre vineyard (Lakeridge Winery & Vineyards) is in Clermont, Florida. It also owns 450 acres in the Florida Panhandle. They grow native varieties of the red Noble and bronze Carlos and Welder muscadines, producing premium, sparkling and dessert wines from vinifers and muscadine grapes.

Nearby Activities: The St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum explores the history of the nation's oldest port with guided tours and interactive exhibits. See a sunken ship and the keeper's home. It's a toss-up as to whether the climb up the 219 steps is better as a workout or photo op of the view of St. Augustine, the Atlantic Ocean, the Intracoastal Waterway, the Bridge of Lions and the beaches.

The St. Augustine Lighthouse. (Photo by SeanPavonePhoto/iStock/Getty Images)

The Project SWING (St. Augustine's Wish for Its Next Generation) playground provides a great place for burning off excess energy. It was designed and built by the community in 1997 and has swings, slides, climbing structures, a wooden play space with tubes, a fort, a space shuttle and a lighthouse. A separate playground with a sandbox and play trolley and lighthouse is perfect for toddlers. A picnic area and pavilion are available.

Where to Stay: It'll take 30,000 Wyndham Rewards points per night to book a room at [TRYP by Wyndham Sebastian St. Augustine](#) with two queen beds in an oversized room with a wet bar, microwave and refrigerator. The [Holiday Inn Express & Suites St. Augustine North](#) has rooms from 30,000 points for a room with two queen beds.

Featured photo by Maica/E+Getty Images.